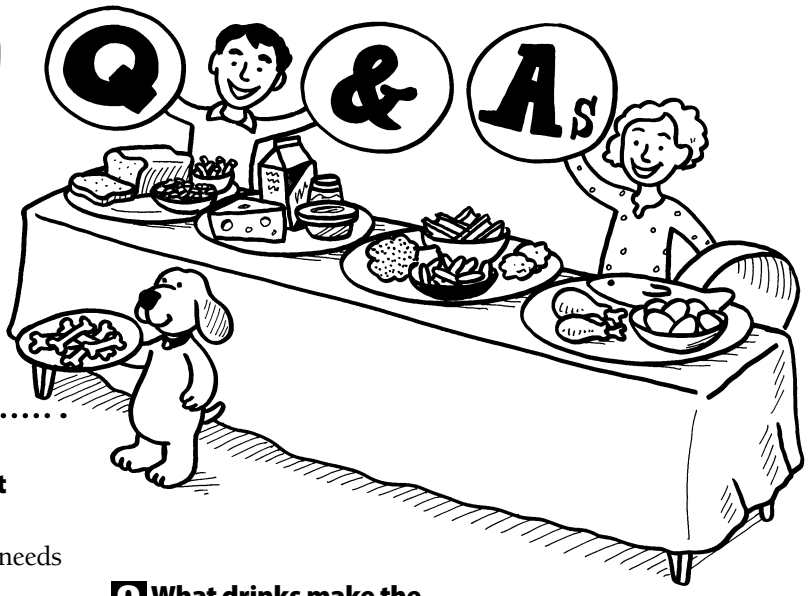
Nutrition Q & As



Building good eating habits is a surefire way to boost your child's health. These answers to common questions can help your family make wise decisions when it comes to food choices.

Q What foods should I try to get into my child's diet each day?

A To have a healthy and balanced diet, your youngster needs foods from these groups every day:

- whole grains like whole-wheat bread, brown rice, or multigrain pasta
- vegetables—raw or cooked, in a variety of colors
- fruit, preferably fresh or frozen with no sugar added
- dairy products (fat-free milk and low-fat cheese or yogurt)
- lean protein from meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or beans

Note: The amount of each food your child needs will vary according to age, gender, and level of physical activity. Ask your pediatrician or school nurse, or look online at *www.choosemyplate.gov*.



Q My youngster won't eat vegetables. What should I do?

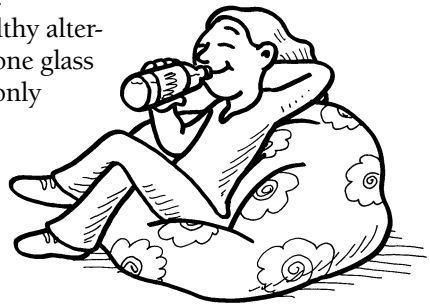
A This is a common problem. Try these ideas:

- Make sampling new vegetables a family adventure. It can be fun to try artichokes or bok choy when it's new to everyone. Let your child pick out a different vegetable during each trip to the grocery store and then help you find a recipe for it.
- Offer vegetables raw. Some children prefer crunchy vegetables over cooked ones. *Tip:* Kids love to dip. Put out vegetables (sugar snap peas, green beans, baby carrots) with low-fat ranch dressing, salsa, or hummus.
- "Hide" vegetables in foods your youngster likes. Try adding frozen chopped spinach (thawed) to his favorite meatloaf or diced cooked cauliflower to macaroni and cheese. For other ideas, look through cookbooks like *The Sneaky Chef: Simple Strategies for Hiding Healthy Foods in Kids' Favorite Meals* by Missy Chase Lapine.

Q What drinks make the healthiest choices?

A Water is the best option—it can keep your child's digestive system healthy and quench her thirst without adding extra sodium, sugar, or calories. It's also important for your child to drink fat-free milk so she gets the calcium she needs for strong bones and teeth.

Fruit juice can be a healthy alternative, if limited to about one glass a day. Make sure you buy only juices labeled 100% real fruit juice.



Q What can we do to make our weekly menus healthier?

A Little changes can mean a lot. You can get started with simple steps like these:

Step 1: Try to eat more foods prepared from scratch. Processed foods (quick-to-prepare boxed dinners, for example) are often high in salt, fat, and calories. To save time, plan a day when you can cook double batches of healthy recipes—then eat one, and freeze the other for later.

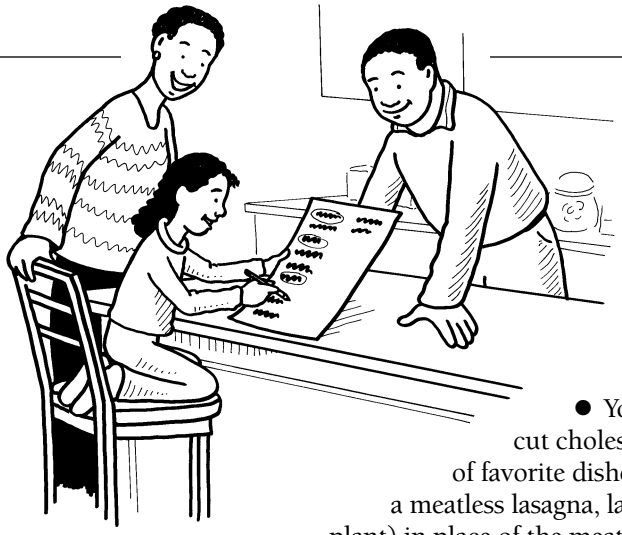
Step 2: Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into meals and snacks. You might stir a handful of berries into your child's oatmeal at breakfast, tuck spinach leaves into his sandwich for lunch, give him celery sticks with peanut butter for an afternoon snack, serve asparagus and baked acorn squash with dinner, and offer him a fresh orange or apple before bedtime.

Step 3: Add flavor without adding sugar or salt by trying different herbs and spices. Basil, oregano, and marjoram are good in pasta and tomato dishes, for instance. Dill, chives, and tarragon liven up salads. And red pepper flakes, chili powder, and cumin make spicy additions to Mexican-style dishes like burritos and enchiladas.

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Q How can I encourage my child to choose healthy snacks?

A Teach her to think of snacks as a way to get part of her daily nutrition. Consider making a snack "menu" together.

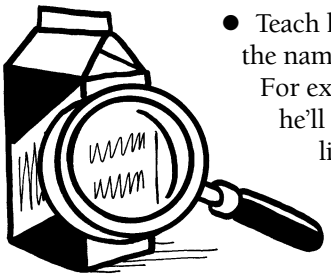
First, ask her to list snacks she likes. Then, go through the items with her, and have her circle the ones that include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and low-fat dairy. *Examples:* fruit smoothies, popcorn, frozen waffles.

Next, your youngster can use markers to rewrite and illustrate the list on a small poster board. She could separate the items into two columns—one for snacks to grab on the go (a box of raisins, a hard-boiled egg) and the other for items taking a little time (baked sweet potato "fries," a cheese-and-bean quesadilla).

Hang your child's menu on the fridge. You can use it as a handy checklist when writing a grocery list, and she'll have an instant reminder of nutritious foods that make tasty snacks.

Q How can I help my youngster manage his food allergies away from home?

A Food allergies can cause everything from rashes to life-threatening emergencies. If your child has been diagnosed with a food allergy, help him take control with these suggestions:



- Teach him to read food labels and know the names his allergen might be called. For example, if he's allergic to milk, he'll need to watch for ingredients like casein, lactose, and whey.
- When your youngster's going home with a friend or to an after-school activity, have him pack something he can eat. He can also take his own snacks to parties in case he can't have the foods served.
- If he's not sure what a snack or meal contains, he should politely decline it. Remind him that it is better to gently refuse food than to get sick from eating it.
- For severe food allergies, make sure your child carries an epinephrine kit with him in case of emergencies.

Q Does eating healthy mean giving up our favorite dishes?

A Sometimes our favorite foods are those that are high in fat, sugar, salt, or calories. Try giving your recipes a makeover with ideas like these:

- Reduce fat and calories by replacing half the fat (butter, oil) with unsweetened applesauce (⅔ cup applesauce = 1 cup butter). Use fat-free versions of ingredients like milk, sour cream, or cheese.
- When you make tacos, nachos, and spaghetti, use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey, and drain after browning it. You'll lower the cholesterol and calories.
- You can boost nutrients and also cut cholesterol with vegetarian versions of favorite dishes such as lasagna or chili. For a meatless lasagna, layer vegetables (zucchini, eggplant) in place of the meat. For chili, use more beans and skip the meat.
- Add fiber by switching to whole grains. Swap brown rice for white rice in stuffed peppers, or use whole-grain noodles instead of white noodles in chicken chow mein, for example.

Note: Remember, every now and then it's okay to enjoy a treat, whether it's a main course your family likes or a special dessert.

Q How can we change our eating habits to lose weight?

A Small steps can make a big difference when your family is trying to lose weight. Start with these suggestions:

- Eat breakfast. Skipping the morning meal can leave you hungry and often leads to overeating later in the day.
- Make calories count. Try not to eat foods that add calories without nutritional value (soda or chips, for instance). Instead, look for "nutrient-rich" foods—those that are packed with healthy vitamins and minerals and will fill you up. *Examples:* brightly colored fruits and vegetables, lean poultry, fish, fat-free milk, beans, whole grains.
- Put salad dressings and sauces on the side, and dip your food into them. You'll still enjoy the flavor but will have fewer calories and less fat.
- Read food labels and measure out portions to learn what a healthy serving size looks like.

Tip: Talk to your family doctor, the school nurse, or a registered dietitian to create a healthy eating plan that will help your family meet weight goals.



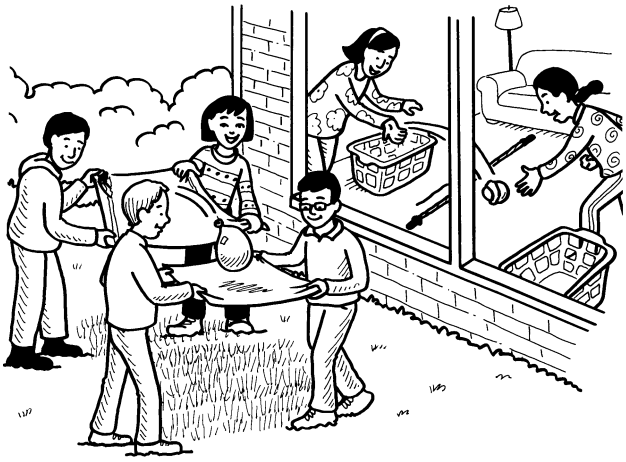
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Active Inside and Outside

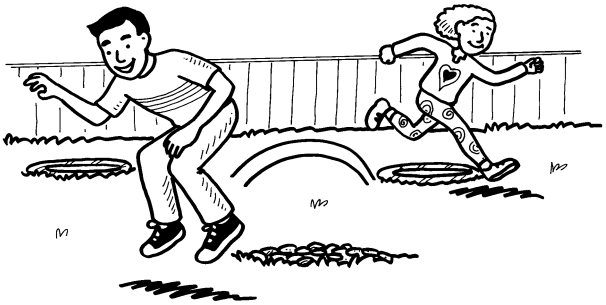


Active play makes the best exercise since it keeps kids coming back for more! Encourage your children to stay active—whether outside or inside—with these fun activities and games. You don't need fancy equipment or a gym membership, just a little creativity.

OUTDOORS

Adventure course

Together, create a course with "hazards." Your child might line up pebbles as a "rock slide" to hop over and scatter hula hoops as "pools" to run around. Add a red towel for a "lava river" for him to cross by jumping over with both feet. Then, take turns completing the course, and time each person. Who can get through the fastest? Or make it a follow-the-leader game, and take turns being the leader.



Dress-up relay

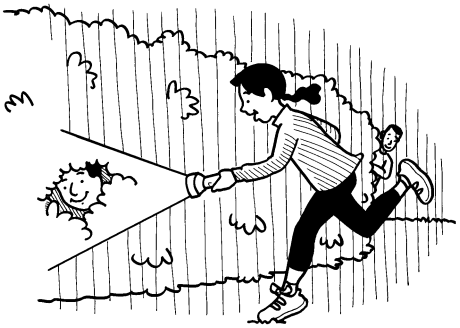
Let your youngster gather two coats, two hats, two scarves, and two pairs of gloves. Put each set of clothing into a bag, and place the bags on separate chairs at one end of a yard. Have players divide into two lines and stand 15 yards away from a chair. The first person on each team races to the chair and puts on the coat, hat, scarf, and gloves. Then she races back and takes off the items. The next person puts them on, runs to the chair, removes them, puts them back in the bag, and runs back to tag the next player. Keep going until one team finishes—and wins.

Straddle ball

This game is good for a group. Stand in a circle, facing each other with feet wide apart and each foot touching the foot of the person next to you. One person rolls a playground ball, aiming to get it through another person's legs before that player can stop it with his hands. *Note:* Players have to keep their hands on their knees unless a ball is rolled toward them. If the player stops it, he gets a point and rolls it again. If he doesn't, he retrieves the ball and then rolls it (no point scored). The first one to get 10 points is the winner.

Flashlight hide-and-seek

Grab a flashlight for this fun nighttime game. Give the flashlight to one person ("It"), who has to find and tag the other players by shining the flashlight on them. Players get a 30-second head start to hide, and then It goes searching for them. The last one found becomes It for the next game. *Variation:* When It tags a player, she hands the flashlight over, and that person becomes It. Keep transferring the flashlight until everyone has been found.



Water balloon toss

Fill a few water balloons, and plan on getting wet! Form two-person teams, and give each team a towel to stretch between them (holding it by the corners). Have the teams stand a few feet apart and bounce a water balloon from one towel to another—without popping the balloon. With each toss, take a step away from each other. Play until the balloon pops, and then begin again with a new one.

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INDOORS



Stuffed animal dance

For this game, you'll need one stuffed animal per player. Put the stuffed animals in a pile in the middle of the room. Name one person the "zookeeper." Have her turn on music, and everyone else dances, jumps, and hops around to the beat. As they're dancing, the zookeeper removes one stuffed animal from the pile and then stops the music. The players have to grab a stuffed animal from the pile, and the person who doesn't get one is out. Keep playing, removing one stuffed animal on each round. The last one with an animal gets to be the next zookeeper.

Workout tower

Help your child cover 10–12 empty cereal, tissue, or other boxes with plain paper. On each box, he should write an exercise ("jumping jacks," "sit-ups"). To play, take turns adding a box to build a tower. Each time, all the players do the exercise written on the box. The number of times they do it depends on the block's position in the tower. For example, if a player adds the fifth box ("Bounce a ball"), each person bounces a ball five times. Then, they repeat the activities from the rest of the tower (four jumping jacks, three sit-ups, and so on). When the tower topples, start the fun again.



Sock basketball

You don't need a hoop or even a basketball for this game—just socks and two laundry baskets! Make the socks into balls by folding one sock into another. Then, place the laundry baskets on opposite sides of a room, and divide the room in half by laying down a jump rope. Each player has one side of the room (if you have more players, form teams). The object of the game is to get the most sock balls into the opposing player's basket. You can try to block the other player's shots, but you can't cross the line. When all the balls are tossed, count the ones in each basket. Whoever landed the most shots wins.

Bug races

Tap into your youngster's imagination with this clever race. Use an open space in a basement, hallway, or family room. Decide on three "bugs" and their moves. For example, beetles could crawl on hands and knees, caterpillars might scoot on their tummies, and grasshoppers would crouch and jump forward. Race three times, with all players being the same bug. Which bug is the fastest? The silliest?



Broom hockey

This two-player game calls for two brooms, a small rubber or plastic ball, and two empty cartons. At opposite ends of a room, place the boxes on their sides (open end facing in)—they'll be the goals. Give each player a broom, place the ball in the middle of the room, and start with a face-off. The players stand opposite each other, count to three, and use their brooms to try to control the ball. Then, each person tries to score points by getting the ball into her goal. After a goal is scored, begin again with a face-off. The first player to score five points wins.

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Quick-and Healthy-Recipes



Good, nutritious meals don't have to take a lot of time. And you don't need a whole grocery list of ingredients to make something your kids (and you!) will enjoy eating.

Here are easy recipes you can use to get dinner on the table in a hurry. Pick your speed—fast for lunches or dinners that come together in 30 minutes and even faster for meals that take about 15 minutes.

Each recipe makes 4 servings.

Fast: Chicken stir-fry

Mix, cut, heat, and stir—and dinner is on the table!

Ingredients

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 package Asian frozen vegetable mix
1 tbsp. olive oil
2 cups brown rice, cooked

Sauce

½ tsp. cornstarch
¼ cup low-sodium chicken broth (or water)
3 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
1 tsp. sugar



Mix the sauce ingredients, and set aside. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces. Microwave the vegetables until heated through. Heat the oil to medium high in a wok or large nonstick skillet. Add the chicken; stir until it's no longer pink. Then, toss in the veggies, and continue stirring. Gently pour in the sauce, and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat, and let sit 1–2 minutes. Serve over rice.

Faster: "Fried" rice

Eggs replace the chicken in this tasty Asian-inspired dish.



Ingredients

1 package frozen peas and carrots
1 tbsp. olive oil
3 eggs
2 cups brown rice, cooked

Sauce

2 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
1 tsp. sesame oil

Microwave the vegetables until heated through. Bring the olive oil to medium-high heat in a wok or large skillet. Whisk the eggs and cook them in the skillet, breaking them apart as you would scrambled eggs. When the eggs are nearly set, add the cooked rice, vegetables, and sauce. Heat for another minute, and serve.

Fast: Cheesy calzones

Fill and fold for a yummy pizza-type dinner.



Ingredients

1 lb. pizza dough
1½ cups low-fat ricotta cheese
½ cup low-fat mozzarella cheese, shredded
½ cup fresh spinach, torn into small pieces
1 egg, lightly beaten
½ tsp. dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste
1 jar spaghetti sauce

Preheat the oven to 425°. Mix the cheeses, spinach, egg, and seasonings. Then, divide the dough into fourths. Form each section into a ball, and roll into a circle on a floured surface. Top each circle with ¼ of the cheese filling. Fold the dough over, and squeeze the ends together. Prick the top of each calzone with a fork three times, and place on a cookie sheet sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake 15 minutes or until golden. Heat the sauce for dipping.

Faster: Pita pizzas

The pita bread replaces the dough in this recipe—providing a ready-made crust.

Ingredients

whole-wheat pitas
1 jar spaghetti sauce
cut-up vegetables
such as green peppers, broccoli, zucchini
low-fat mozzarella cheese, shredded



Preheat the oven to 375°. Split the pitas in half. Spread about ¼ cup sauce on each pita half, and place on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Top with vegetables and cheese. Bake 10 minutes until the cheese melts and the pita is crisp. Serve with the extra sauce.

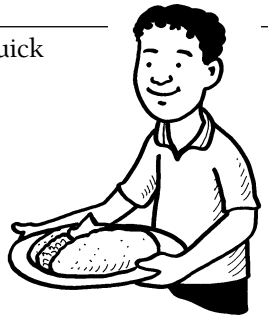
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Fast: Turkey tacos

Who doesn't like tacos? Here's a quick turkey version.



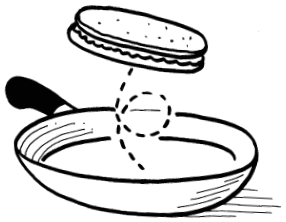
Ingredients
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 lb. ground turkey
1 packet low-sodium taco seasoning mix
1 package corn tortillas
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 cup salsa

Heat the oil in a large skillet, and add the ground turkey. Cook until the meat is no longer pink, and drain. Stir in the taco seasoning mix and ¾ cup water. Remove from the stove, and cover to keep warm.

Then, heat the corn tortillas on a hot griddle or in the oven until they are crisp. For each tortilla, top with about 3 tbsp. ground turkey mix, a little lettuce, and a dollop of salsa.

Faster: Quesadillas

Swap turkey for black beans in this cheesy Mexican-style dish.



Ingredients
4 large whole-wheat tortillas
2 cups low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
garlic powder
chili powder
salsa

Top each tortilla with ½ cup cheese and 2 tbsp. black beans. Sprinkle on garlic and chili powders (use more or less chili powder to control the spiciness). Fold each tortilla in half. Then, heat two skillets to medium high, and add the tortillas. Flip when the bottoms become crisp. Serve with salsa.

Fast: Savory salmon

Put healthy fish on the table with this yummy recipe.

Ingredients
⅛ cup yellow mustard
⅛ cup honey
½ tsp. vinegar
1 lb. salmon fillets (or other firm fish)
salt and pepper

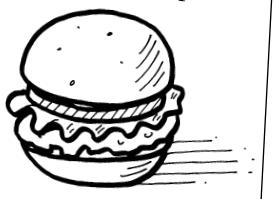


Preheat a grill or broiler. Mix the mustard, honey, and vinegar together, and brush onto the fish fillets. Add salt and pepper to taste. Grill (or place onto a foil-lined cookie sheet and broil 6 inches from the heat) for 8 minutes or until the fish is opaque. Serve with salad.

Faster: Shrimp sandwiches

Use cooked shrimp to make a meal in a snap.

Ingredients
1 lb. cooked shrimp
⅓ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
¼ tsp. hot sauce
4 whole-wheat sandwich rolls
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 tomato, sliced



Chop shrimp into pieces, and mix with mayonnaise and hot sauce. Fill each roll with the shrimp mixture, and add lettuce and a tomato slice.

Fun snacks

Cinnamon Apple Pops

Here's a clever treat to take to the park.

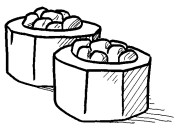


Ingredients
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tbsp. sugar
2 apples
juice from ¼ lemon
12 lollipop sticks (available at craft stores)

Mix the cinnamon and sugar together. Core the apples, and cut each one into 6 wedges. Place the pieces into a large zipper bag along with the lemon juice and the cinnamon and sugar. Seal tightly, and shake. Remove from the bag, and insert a lollipop stick in each apple piece. *Do-ahead note:* You can cover the apple pops in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to one day.

Cucumber Cups

Scoop and fill cucumber pieces for this tasty nibble.

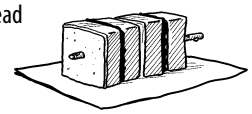


Ingredients
2 large cucumbers
1 cup cooked corn kernels, cooled
4 oz. whipped cream cheese
salt and pepper to taste

Cut each cucumber into 1-inch slices (if desired, remove the skins with a vegetable peeler). Use a melon baller or small spoon to scoop out the soft center of each slice, making sure not to go all the way through. Mix the corn and cream cheese, add salt and pepper, and fill each "cup" with the mixture. Chill for 15 minutes, and eat immediately.

Pretzel Sandwich Skewers

Combine a ham sandwich with a pretzel for a bite to remember!



Ingredients
4 slices whole-wheat bread
4 slices low-sodium ham
mustard
9 thin pretzel sticks

Make 2 ham sandwiches, using 2 slices of bread, 2 slices of ham, and a little mustard for each one. Cut the sandwiches into 1-inch squares (about 18 pieces total). Using a chopstick, gently push a hole in the center of each square. Then, thread two sandwich bites onto each pretzel.

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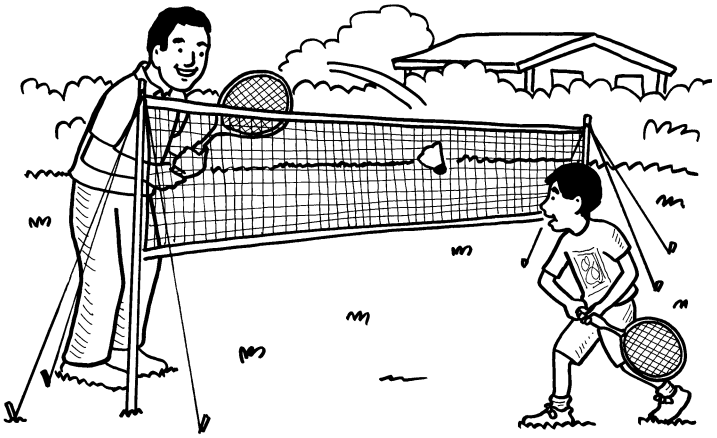
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Power Up! Power Down!

Screens may be everywhere these days, but that doesn't mean your child needs one to have fun! In fact, your youngster can have even more fun—and stay healthier—by powering down the screens and powering up the physical activity. Here's how.



Tip #1: Keep a log

With this poster, family members will see at a glance how much time they spend being active vs. in front of a screen. Let your child divide a poster board into two columns: "Active time" and "Screen time." For every 15 minutes a family member does something like badminton or yoga, he can draw a picture in the first column (birdie, yoga pose). And for every 15 minutes spent on a screen, he should draw the device used (TV, laptop, video game, smartphone) in the second column. Help your youngster tally up your totals once a week. If your family had more screen time than active time, aim to improve by at least 15 minutes the following week.

Tip #2: Promote playtime

Encourage your child to play actively for at least 60 minutes every day. Chances are she'll get so caught up in playing, she'll forget all about screens. Try this: Make a "play door." You and your youngster could write ideas for active play on sticky notes ("fly a kite," "juggle balls"). Place these notes on her bedroom door or inside the front door. When she has free time, she can pick an activity—or think of a new one to add.

Tip #3: Find your niche

Your child can't play a video game if he's climbing an indoor rock wall or tumbling across a mat! Give him healthy ways to use his time by letting him take a class or join a team. Check out classes and groups at community centers, after-school programs, or places of worship. He can try various activities until he finds ones he likes. He might decide on rock climbing, running, gymnastics, or even pickleball.

Tip #4: Fill a "TV basket"



Keep a basket of your youngster's toys near the TV. Then, instead of watching shows, she gets to play with something from the basket. Switch up the contents each week to keep things interesting. Include a Twister game, a jump rope, or a library book of children's poems to act out, for instance.

Active alternatives

Here are 10 quick, easy, and screen-free activities your youngster can enjoy indoors or outdoors.



1. Form a marching band with toy instruments (or pots, pans, and wooden spoons).

2. Play leapfrog.

3. See which foot you can balance on the longest.

4. Form a conga line—stand in a row, hold onto the shoulders of the person in front of you, and "snake" through the house or yard.

5. Make up and perform cheers.

6. Hold a limbo contest.

7. Tape down a long piece of yarn as a "tightrope," and walk on it.

8. Do the hokey-pokey.

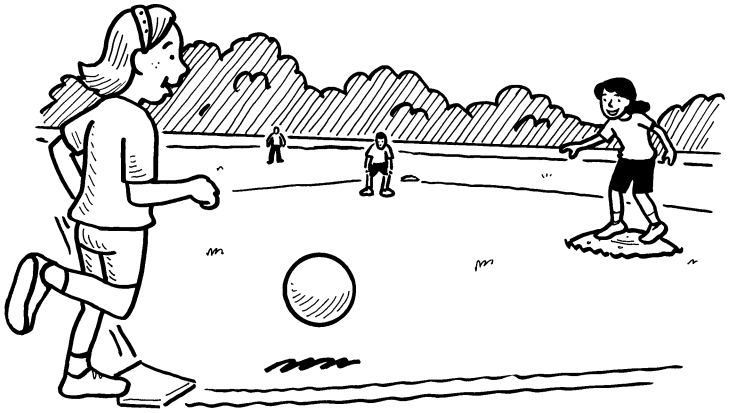
9. Have an egg-and-spoon relay race—hard-boil the eggs first!

10. Play hopscotch.

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Tip #5: Start a club

Suggest that your child launch a "Fitness Club" with her friends. Members should agree on a time to meet and take turns hosting. Each week's host gets to choose the activity. One week they might play follow the leader through a sprinkler, while another week they could organize a kickball game. *Idea:* Mix things up by offering to take them on field trips for activities they haven't tried—say, to play volleyball at a sand volleyball pit in the park.

Tip #6: Enjoy the outdoors

There's so much to discover outside. Look for active ways to enjoy nature together. For instance, your youngster could take a blank notebook on a family walk and draw pictures of the trees and plants. Or you might ride bikes on a path you haven't explored before. Gardening is good exercise, too—and you'll boost your family's health even more by eating the vegetables and herbs you and your child grow.



Tip #7: Be the star

Challenge your youngster to develop her own active versions of favorite TV shows or video games. If she enjoys a reality dance program, she and her friends might put on music and make up dance routines. Or if she likes a video game with an obstacle course, she could set up her own course in the backyard to race over, under, around, and through with friends.

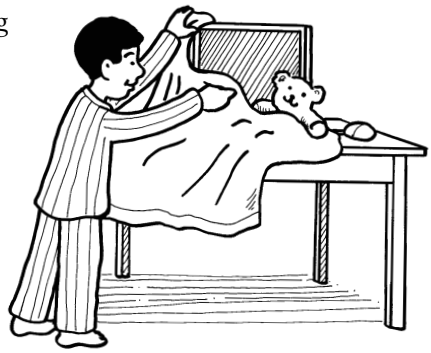
Tip #8: Volunteer to help others

Look for a place in your community where you can volunteer as a family. Check the parks and recreation department and your local United Way for active ideas. Perhaps you'll find a playground cleanup day or a trail-clearing event. Or train for a "fun run" or a 5K to support a good cause. Another idea is to help neighbors in need, perhaps ones who are older, have new babies, or are ill. You could offer to do yardwork, wash cars, or walk dogs.

Give screens a break

It's easier to avoid watching TV or using your phone if you plan ahead. Consider these ways to manage screen time for the whole family:

- Set a "screen bedtime" at least an hour before your youngster's bedtime. Your child may enjoy "tucking in" the TV or computer for the night by covering it with a blanket and placing a stuffed animal beside it.



- Keep TVs and other devices out of your youngster's bedroom. He'll have less screen time, and it'll be easier for you to supervise his activities.
- Switch off computers, video game systems, and TVs when you're not using them. After your family watches a show, turn off the TV rather than channel surfing to find more programs. And if your laptop is off, you'll be less tempted to constantly check work email or social networks.
- Turn your car into a screen-free zone. Make a point of showing your child how you put your phone in your bag or glove compartment before you start the car. Then, enjoy time together by talking about the scenery, counting cars of a specific color, or singing songs.

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Family Cooking = Learning Fun!

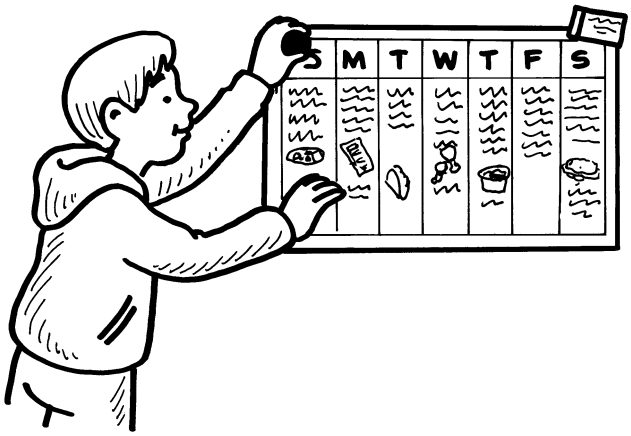
The kitchen is more than a place to cook and eat—it can also be a fun "classroom" for your children. Planning and preparing healthy meals together is a great way to build reading, math, and science skills. Plus, your kids will enjoy eating the results of their "lessons"!



Planning meals

Read cookbooks

Browse through cookbooks or food blogs together, looking at the pictures and reading healthy recipes aloud to each other. You'll find new recipes and foods, and your child will get reading practice. Encourage her to look up unfamiliar words (*sift*, *thyme*) in the cookbook glossary or in a dictionary. Earmark recipes to try, and have your youngster make shopping lists—she'll work on writing, spelling, and organization. *Idea:* Check out cookbooks at the library. The librarian can suggest ones geared toward children.



Write a weekly meal plan

What's for dinner this week? Let your child help you decide on a meal for each evening that includes protein, whole grains, vegetables, fruit, and dairy. For instance, say your Sunday meal will be salmon with sweet potatoes and brussels sprouts. Ask him what's missing (grains, fruit, and dairy) and what foods could fill in the gap (brown rice and a side salad of blueberries and feta cheese). Have him make a weekly meals calendar to post in your kitchen.

Shop for deals

Show your youngster how you use math to save money at the grocery store and make decisions about what to buy. Before leaving home, let her look through grocery ads for coupons and sale items. Have her suggest items for your list based on what she sees. Then as you shop, help her figure out the best deals. You might say, "If frozen asparagus is regularly $2.50, but now it's $4 for two bags, how much would we save by buying two bags?" ($1, because 2 x $2.50 = $5, and $5 – $4 = $1.) Or tell her to compare the per-pound price of whole chicken, chicken parts, and boneless, skinless chicken breasts. What's the difference in price?



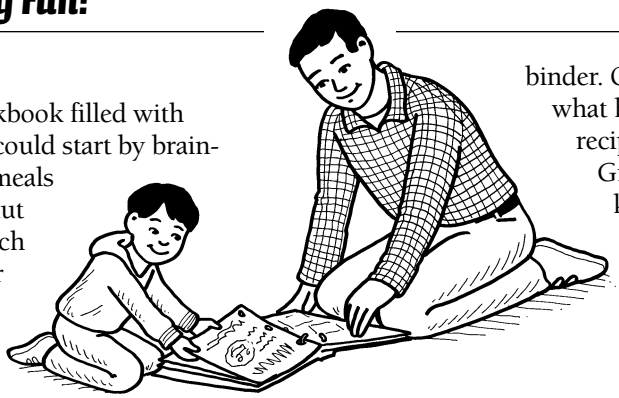
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Create a family cookbook

Let your child put together a cookbook filled with healthy recipes for your family. You could start by brainstorming ways to make his favorite meals more nutritious (add pureed butternut squash to macaroni and cheese, switch to whole-grain spaghetti). Have your youngster write and illustrate a revised recipe for each dish and put the sheets into a three-ring binder. Or help him make connections to what he's learning in school by finding recipes that relate. If he's studying Greece, he can add a recipe for spanakopita (spinach pie), or if he's learning Chinese, he might look for stir-fries. *Tip:* Encourage your child to be creative by coming up with his own recipes or adding twists to ones he finds.



Preparing meals

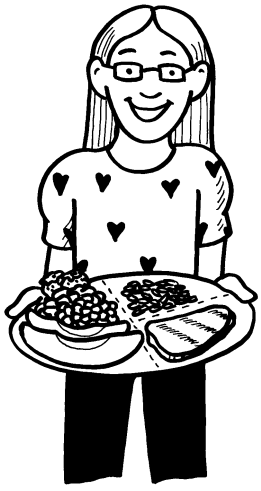
Measure ingredients



Cooking is a natural way to practice measuring. Try putting your youngster in charge of measuring ingredients when you cook. Have him experiment with different sizes of measuring cups and spoons to discover that 3 tsp. = 1 tbsp. or 2 cups = 1 pint. Also, pose math problems as you go: "This recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth. We're doubling the recipe—how much broth do we need?" ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup x 2 = 1 cup.) *Idea:* Suggest substitutions or easy changes to make recipes healthier. For instance, he could use less sugar in a pancake recipe (say, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup), and see if he notices a difference in the taste.

See healthy fractions

Instead of serving your child's food, let her dish it out herself. That way, she can learn the healthiest way to fill her plate—and see fractions in action. First, go to *choosemyplate.gov* and talk about what fraction of the colorful plate each food group takes up: Vegetables and fruit cover $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate, grains a little over $\frac{1}{4}$, and protein just under $\frac{1}{4}$. Then, have your youngster practice using fractions at meal time. She could put peas and melon slices on $\frac{1}{2}$ of her plate, brown rice on $\frac{1}{4}$, and chicken on the last $\frac{1}{4}$. Ask her to say the number sentence she just made ($\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = 1$).



Bake and experiment

What makes muffins and cookies rise? Your youngster can explore the science of baking with this experiment. First, find a healthy muffin recipe to try—one that includes whole-wheat flour and applesauce rather than oil is ideal. Help him make half the batch with baking soda and half without. What happens? (The ones without baking soda will turn out flat.) Explain that baking soda combines with other ingredients to produce air bubbles—and these tiny pockets of air allow the muffins to rise. *Idea:* Illustrate this idea simply with water, vinegar, and baking soda. Have your child fill a cup halfway with water, stir in 2 tsp. baking soda, and slowly add 2 tbsp. vinegar. He'll see firsthand the bubbles that are created.

Make your own ice cream

Here's a cool, tasty way for your youngster to whip up a batch of healthier ice cream while learning about states of matter.

Help her put 1 cup milk, 1 tsp. sugar, and 1 tsp. vanilla into a quart-sized plastic freezer bag. She should tightly seal the bag, gently pressing out the air, and put that bag in a second freezer bag, sealing and pressing that one carefully as well. Next, have her add ice cubes to a large empty can with a lid (for example, a coffee can) to fill it halfway. Sprinkle the ice with 1 tbsp. salt. Then, she should place the bag inside the can, snap on the lid, and roll the can back and forth vigorously for 15 minutes.

When she opens the bags, she'll see ice cream! Explain that the very cold ice (the salt lowers the freezing point) turned the liquid mixture into a solid. And it's healthier than store-bought versions that have more sugar and fat.

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Nutrition Nuggets™

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